



**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
Nineteenth meeting**

Geneva, 29, 30 and 31 May 2024

Intervention for Agenda Item 3 (a): Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development: update on the most recent developments at the national level.

The basic policy and planning framework for Education for Sustainable Development in Spain is based on two laws:

First, the Organic **Law on Education**, approved in 2020 and promoted by the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports. This law recognises the importance of education for sustainable development (hereinafter called ESD) through the following aspects:

- ESD and global citizenship must be included in the educational plans and programmes of all compulsory education.
- The law promotes sustainable schools as key drivers for ecological and social transformation in their environment, articulating educational interventions that go beyond the school.
- The coordination and complementarity of formal and non-formal education will also be promoted so that it contributes to the acquisition of competences for the full development of the personality.

Second, the Vocational Training law approved in 2022 has become the agile and effective instrument that is facilitating the upskilling and permanent reskilling of people. The new law implementation is progressing as planned:

- The **Royal Decree 659/2023 for the Regulation of the Vocational Training System** has established the organization of the Vocational Training System, which guarantees a system of professional training and accompaniment, serves the strengthening and sustainability of the economy, is able to flexibly respond to the interests, expectations and aspirations of professional qualification of people throughout their lives and to the skills demanded by the labour market, and explicitly settles the joint and shared work with regional administrations.
- The Law and Decrees aim to incorporate and integrate the transformations resulting from digitalization, ecological transition and sustainability in all sectors into the integral and flexible new VET system. This new system also envisages the need to incorporate new professional skills demanded by the labour market as structural factor for the success in the new economic model: innovation, applied research, entrepreneurship, digitalization, sustainability and the climate emergency. In order to facilitate this integration of sustainability skills into professional training the Ministry of Education, VET and Sports has designed a compulsory module on Sustainability applied



to the production system. The aim is to provide students with information on the environmental, social, and governance challenges our society faces. It focuses on developing knowledge and basic competences in green economy, sustainability, and those conditions in which the demands of sustainability modify the productive processes of the corresponding sector.

The Ministry has also designed a compulsory module on Digitalisation applied to the production system. It aims to develop the knowledge and basic competences in digitalization and the conditions in which the demands of digitalisation modify the productive processes of the corresponding sector. Both modules will be included in the curricula of all intermediate and higher vocational training programmes from September 2024.

On the other hand, the Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge has been working for more than thirty-five years on the development of no-formal environmental education, raising awareness, training, access to information and citizen participation programmes through the **National Centre of Environmental Education**.

In January 2020, the Government approved the Declaration of Climate and Environmental Emergency, which recognises the role of environmental education through the commitment to develop a **national Action Plan on Environmental Education for sustainability**.

This plan, passed in August 2021 and coordinated by both ministries responsible for environmental and education affairs, is a strategic document that aims to promote new efforts, define priorities, and coordinate initiatives in the field of Environmental Education for Sustainability or ESD in the formal, no-formal, and informal scopes. It is a practical document with a set of 61 actions to be implemented in the period 2021-2025 distributed in six priority areas:

- 1- Mainstreaming ESD in public policy.
- 2- Innovation, research and improvement of environmental education programmes and activities.
- 3- Incorporation of sustainability in the education and training system.
- 4- Professionalisation and consolidation of ESD.
- 5- Scenarios and specific spaces for ESD intervention.
- 6- Communication, outreach, and citizen action.

This plan is designed on the basis of inter-ministerial cooperation and aims to generate alliances between a wide range of centres and institutions competent in the development of environmental education programmes aimed at a variety of target groups: citizens, families, ESD professionals, students, journalists or public employees.

The plan is developed through Annual Work Programmes that specify the actions to be carried out, responsible organizations, a budget estimation and a system of indicators that are assessed at the end of the current year.

The **Work Programme for the year 2024** of the national Action Plan on Environmental Education for sustainability included 72 actions to be developed by both ministries. Among them, these are some examples of actions that have been implemented and that would be linked to the 4 priority action areas or strands identified by the Steering Committee for the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development:

Regarding the strand *Quality education and ESD*, we have created a new financing line for research projects in the field of environmental education in National Parks that aims at innovating and developing successful participative programmes in these natural protected areas.



In relation to the strand *Whole institution approach and ESD*, we continue with the annual recognition of the most sustainable educative centres.

In connection with *Digital education, information, and communications technology and ESD*, this year we are going to create a working group of eco-influencers, in order to start a dialogue on the importance of sustainability communication, avoiding fake news and addressing young people.

Finally, on the strand *Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD*, we are going to develop several training activities for environmental educators in the fields of eco-emotional education, ESD through arts, how to design scape rooms on sustainability, how to communicate climate change in mass media (for journalists), and so on.

Since the approval of the National Action Plan on Environmental Education for sustainability in 2021, both ministries have carried out 98 initiatives that develop its 61 actions. Moreover, **three governance groups** have been created to encourage other stakeholders to enforce the plan.

As a result of the creation of one of these governance groups, almost all the regional administrations of Spain have communicated their contributions to the National Action Plan. In 2024 they have informed of the commitment for the implementation of 407 initiatives on Education for Sustainable Development in their respective territories.

The Plan's implementation period ends next year, and in 2024 it is foreseen to create a new governance group with representatives of other Spanish ministries. The main objective of this group consists of the joint elaboration of a new National Action Plan on ESD in the formal, no-formal and informal scope for the period 2026-2030.